

Scientists: Scottish independence may hit research

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Several leading British academics say scientific research could suffer if Scotland votes for independence in a September referendum.

The presidents of the Royal Society, the British Academy and the Academy of Medical Sciences—Paul Nurse, Nicholas Stern and John Tooke—argued that independence could endanger the links and collaborations between Scottish scientists and those elsewhere in Britain.

"We believe that if separation were to occur, research not only in Scotland but also the rest of the U.K. would suffer," they wrote in letter published Saturday in the Times of London newspaper.

They also said Scottish taxpayers would have to pay "significantly more" to maintain current levels of [research funding](#).

Scotland votes Sept. 18 on whether to break up the 300-year-old alliance with England. Much of the debate has focused on the economic risks and benefits of independence.

Nurse, a geneticist who shared the 2001 Nobel Prize for medicine, said Saturday some academics were wary of expressing an opinion about independence "because of fear of retribution in relation to future funding."

The pro-independence Scottish government dismissed the academics' warning. It said in a statement that it was committed to "providing levels

of public investment in university research which enable our universities to remain internationally competitive."

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